

# Economic Populist Sovereignism and Electoral Support for Radical Right-Wing Populism<sup>1</sup>

This is a pre-peer-review, pre-copyedit and pre-print version of an article published as “first online” in the Journal **Political Studies**. The publisher-authenticated version, Oscar Mazzoleni and Gilles Ivaldi (2020) *Economic Populist Sovereignism and Electoral Support for Radical Right-Wing Populism*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720958567> is available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/eprint/BBNSREA4TRCKHWK6QRX9/full>

Oscar Mazzoleni <sup>a\*</sup>, Gilles Ivaldi <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Institute of Political Sciences, University of Lausanne, Switzerland; <sup>b</sup> CNRS, SCIENCES-PO, Cevipof, Paris, France

\* corresponding author: Institute of Political Sciences, Géopolis Building, Mouline, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland, [oscar.mazzoleni@unil.ch](mailto:oscar.mazzoleni@unil.ch)

## ABSTRACT

*Sovereignism is at the crux of the current wave of radical right-wing populism (RRP). Populist parties advocate ‘taking back control’ and generally do so in the name of the ‘people’, pledging to restore their economic well-being. This paper argues that populism and sovereignism are inherently connected in RRP politics through a set of values that emphasise popular and national sovereignty. To test the empirical validity of our proposition, we focus on two established European RRPPs, namely the Rassemblement National (RN) in France and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) and use data from an original survey in each country. We find that while RN and SVP voters diverge in general economic orientations, they share similar economic populist sovereignist values that significantly shape electoral support for those parties. These findings suggest that economic populist sovereignism may represent an important driver of support for the RRP, alongside other correlates of RRP voting, such as perceived immigration threat.*

KEYWORDS: Radical Right-Wing Parties, Populism, Sovereignism, Economy, Values, voting preferences

---

<sup>1</sup> The authors are really grateful to Reinhard Heinisch and Andrej Zalsove for their comments concerning a previous version of this article.

## Introduction

Claims to regain popular and national sovereignty are at the crux of the current wave of radical right-wing populism (RRP) in Europe (Kallis, 2018). Populist parties such as the French RN, the Austrian FPÖ, the Lega in Italy, UKIP in UK advocate ‘taking back control’ within their countries, while claiming to represent the ‘true’ people against the political establishment and supranational institutions (Verzichelli, 2020). Such claims to regain national sovereignty are increasingly associated with socioeconomic grievances and issues. While radical right-wing populist parties (RRPPs) are generally considered to mobilize on cultural issues like immigration, socioeconomic issues such as welfare, redistribution and international trade have become another important facet of RRP politics (Otjes et al., 2018; Rodrik, 2018) and should therefore be given further consideration.

This paper aims to make a twofold contribution to current debates on RRP politics. First, we propose to explore more closely the connection between populism and ‘sovereignism’. In spite of the growing electoral success of political entrepreneurs commonly labelled as ‘populist’, the cross-national diffusion of ‘sovereignist’ themes and ideas and their relationship with populism remain relatively under-researched topics. We need a better understanding of how populism interacts with sovereignism to shape RRP mobilization in the context of globalization and the rise of transnational rules and institutions (Sassen, 2015). Here we specifically focus on the ‘sovereignist’ features of the broader concept of nationalism (Bonikowski et al., 2019) and argue that populism and sovereignism are inherently connected with one another in RRP politics through concurrent simultaneous claims of popular and national sovereignty. Typically, populist sovereignism emphasizes the need to re-empower the state as a means of restoring sovereignty and defending the true interests of the ‘people’.

Second, we aim to move beyond the traditional linkage between immigration issues and right-wing populism to explore the economic values underlying RRP sovereignism. The importance of values has been widely discussed in the literature, notably in terms of the classic opposition between materialist and post-materialist orientations (Ignazi, 2006; Inglehart, 2018; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Our attempt here is to develop an alternative demand-side perspective based specifically on economic values. Our approach is directly inspired by recent research suggesting that ‘economic populism and sovereignism’ form a common base for RRPPs’ strategies in Western Europe (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020). To highlight the relevance of economic populist sovereignism, we look at the economic populist sovereignist ‘values-attitudes axis’ and test its impact on voting preferences. Populist ideas resonate with large swathes of voters in Western societies and anxieties about popular and national sovereignty are widespread. It is therefore crucial that we investigate whether economic populist sovereignist values are expressed as a consistent set of attitudes among citizens and to which extent such attitudes may shape electoral support for RRPPs.

Trying to highlight our aims, we test the empirical validity of our concept of economic populist sovereignty across different contexts. In particular we will focus on two Western democracies, France and Switzerland, where two RRPPs —i.e. the Rassemblement National (RN) and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP)— have achieved electoral success in the recent decades.

The paper is organized as follows. The first section of the paper briefly lays down the basis for our framework, discussing the concept of economic populist sovereignty (EPS) as a specific set of values. We then explain the rationale for our selection of cases and survey methodology. Our findings are presented in the next section. We find that the economic values that underlie economic populist sovereignty may be empirically assessed by attitudinal attributes that can be measured among citizens across our two countries and which significantly shape support for RRPPs. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for our understanding of the role of populist economic sovereignist values and themes in contemporary RRP politics.

## Economic values and sovereignty

Socioeconomic issues such as welfare, redistribution and international trade have become important explanations for the rise of populism in recent years. Feelings of economic insecurity and material grievances arising from rapid change in post-industrial societies may be seen as major driving forces behind the rise of radical right-wing populism (Guiso et al, 2017; Rodrik, 2018). According to Ibsen (2019: 796), the current populist resurgence is indicative of a “legitimation crisis [that] ultimately derives from Western welfare states’ effective loss of control over economic life under conditions of economic and financial globalization.” As Gest et al. (2018) suggest, populism manipulates a sense of ‘nostalgic deprivation’ which may not only relate to sociocultural and identity concerns but may also be understood in economic terms, notably in relation to inequalities. As recently argued by Dubet (2019), inequalities create a society of anger through individual experiences of injustice, discrimination, contempt and personal feelings of loss of status, which may fuel populist resentment.

Our proposal here is to grasp the specific relevance of economic components in linking with sovereignist claims in RRP politics. We take our inspiration from recent literature on the nexus between populism and sovereignty (for a discussion, see Heinisch, Werner & Habersack, 2019; Basile, Borri & Verzichelli, 2020) and suggest looking at one important dimension, which is the populist vision of a protective economy putting the people at its core. In RRP politics, such a vision brings forth a new economic allocation by taking economic resources back to the people by asserting democratic self-determination and ‘nation-state’ sovereignty.

From a conceptual point of view, we suggest to distinguish sovereignty from nationalism. The RRP literature tends to focus primarily on the connection between populism and nationalism, with a

particular emphasis on cultural issues, such as immigration (Rydgren, 2017; De Cleen & Stavrakakis, 2017; Rooduijn, 2018a; Brubaker, 2020). In contrast, much less attention has been given to the ‘sovereignism’ component, both at party and voter level. While nationalism focuses on the ‘nation’ in a more general sense, including belonging to a community based on common values and traditions, sovereignism, more specifically, claims to re-empower both the people and the ‘nation-state’ as political subjects, as a means to defend the interests of the people and those of the nation against global threats. Populist sovereignism emphasizes such need for popular and state re-empowerment and effective decision-making and political power over territory (Ichijo, 2009), thus expressing the idea of ‘regaining control’ on behalf of a ‘redefined’ community by ‘re-spatializing’ power (Kallis, 2018: 286-7). In the terms of Charles Maier (2016), territory should therefore be seen as a ‘decision space’, that is the spatial reach of legislation and collective decisions, which is distinct from an ‘identity space’ or space of belonging. Populist sovereignism addresses the insulation of the state from society and demands that “the sovereignty of the government and the people become coterminous again” (Chrysosgelos, 2020: 23).

Within sovereignism, the economic component is of particular relevance. As Toplišek (2018: 11) argues, “populist political actors are more ready to employ the power of the state to address the weakened capacity of democracy in the face of global economic integration.” In the economic realm, populist sovereignist narratives may be defined as “a claim for a political economy that could be beneficial for the (nation-al) people’s wealth” (Basile & Mazzoleni, 2020). In this sense, one might postulate that economic populist sovereignism articulates intertwined economic claims that inform the populist construction of the ‘true’ people as an economic community of ‘deserving’ people whose interests should be defended by re-establishing sovereignty.

#### Economic populist sovereignism as a set of values

From a supply-side perspective, economic populist sovereignism may be analysed as a set of strategies and policy orientations. In terms of policy-making, however, such orientations might be associated with market liberal or more Keynesian state-oriented prescriptions, depending on how parties choose to frame their claims of defending or regaining prosperity and the solutions they see fit to do so. In this sense, economic populist sovereignism may cross-cut traditional economic conflicts of state versus market and it should not be taken simply as a proxy for anti-globalisation stances (Betz & Meret, 2013; Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020; Otjes et al., 2018). This is in line with recent literature which suggests that the economic dimension should no longer be seen as a unidimensional conflict between pro and anti-redistribution (Rathgeb 2020, Attewell 2020).

Turning to a demand-side approach, economic populist sovereignty might be heuristically conceived as a set of values. However, the concept of values and its relationship with attitudes remain debated and discussed among social and political science scholars. Some authors tend to oppose values and attitudes, seeing values as more abstract or durable entities while attitudes would be more specific and contingent (e.g. Rohan, 2000; Ciuk, Lupton & Thornton, 2018). Others such as Van Deth & Scarbrough (1998) emphasize the difficulty to disentangle the value element from attitudes and define values as “conceptions of desirable, used in moral discourse, with a particular relevance for behaviour” (Van Deth & Scarbrough, 1998: 22; see also 25-26). Values are conceptualized “as underlying orientations, which are relevant for, or inform the process of, arriving at attitudes” (p.32).

The relevance of values to the study of political behaviour has been established in the literature, most notably in terms of the opposition between materialist and post-materialist orientations (Ignazi, 2006; Inglehart, 2018). The recent analysis by Norris and Inglehart (2019) of the rise of authoritarian populist parties builds precisely on this idea of value change and shift from materialist aims—which combine national order and economic concerns (Inglehart, 2018)—to a post-material culture and socially liberal values in Western societies. Whilst the common conception of materialism entails also a “law-and-order” component, economic populist sovereignty focuses more specifically on the economic dimension. Economic populist sovereignty might be seen as a set of values, which emphasizes the need to ‘regain control’ on behalf of the community as a means of restoring its well-being and prosperity. Based on Ivaldi and Mazzoleni (2020), we can analytically distinguish four facets:

- First, the ‘true’ community of people share a common economic destiny and not only or not necessarily common ethnic or cultural roots and identity (Mény & Surel, 2000: 195). The people is constructed as a community of hardworking and deserving ‘producers’, with strong emphasis on work ethics.
- Second, the people’s well-being is currently fragile or on the decline and directly at risk. Here the focus is on a ‘nostalgic’ sense of historical decline from a mythologized ‘golden age’ of prosperity rather than a sociotropic evaluation of the current socio-economic context.
- Third, according to EPS narratives, political and economic elites are responsible for the decline / fragility of people’s well-being, together with supranational powers and a variety of external threats.
- Fourth, the people’s well-being needs to be re-established. The absolute source of power is unrestricted popular and national sovereignty and restoring economic sovereignty is seen as the way to re-establish the people’s well-being and ‘true interests’ in order to reflect their will and sovereignty.

The ‘true’ people are defined as a ‘virtuous’ community of ‘makers’ who not only contribute to economic prosperity (see for instance Rathgeb, 2020: 7), but also embody virtue and morality. Political and economic elites are responsible for the decline / fragility of people’s well-being, together with supranational powers and a variety of external threats. In RRP politics, economic populist sovereignty gives priority to the ‘national community’ in terms of jobs, housing and welfare, while arguing that immigration is a danger for national well-being. RRPPs typically embrace welfare chauvinism —that is the belief that access to the welfare state should be restricted to natives (Betz, 1994: 173-174). Economic populist sovereignty also implicitly conveys a message of ‘nostalgia’ for the good ‘old times’ (Betz & Johnson, 2014: 324) and ‘pessimism’ over the present time (Steenvoorden & Harteveld, 2018). Good ‘old days’ times are defined not only as a period where ‘real’ values and identity prevailed, but also and above all, as a period of exceptional economic well-being represented by *Les Trente Glorieuses*: the 30-year post-war boom from 1945 to 1975 in Western Europe.

#### Economic populist sovereignty and voting preference in context

To illustrate the validity of our analytical framework, we propose to test the relevance of our concept of economic populist sovereignty empirically by looking at the ‘values-attitudes axis’. As suggested by Van Deth & Scarbrough (1998), “values become manifest in action (...) by the contribution they make to the formulation of attitudes” (p.33). We adopt this approach and focus on values as can be grasped through attitudinal analysis.

We examine citizen’s economic populist sovereignist attitudes and to what extent these attitudes contribute to voting behaviour. We assume that claims to uphold both popular and national sovereignty are an important feature of contemporary radical right-wing populism in Western democracies. West European RRPPs such as the French RN (formerly FN), the Italian Lega, the Austrian FPÖ, the Swiss SVP and UKIP in Britain advocate ‘taking back control’ from the political establishment, supranational institutions and global forces and they typically do so in the name of the ‘people’ (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni 2020).

While not covering the whole range of RRPPs in Western Europe, we select cases which we consider particularly adapted to test our framework. Our focus is on two countries, France and Switzerland, where relevant RRPPs are currently enjoying substantial levels of electoral support, i.e. the *Rassemblement National* (RN) in France and the *Swiss People’s Party* (SVP). Considered as typical cases of the populist radical right, these parties exhibit the core features of economic populist sovereignty. As Ivaldi and Mazzoleni (2020) show, both parties claim to re-assert national sovereignty to defend their self-identified economic interests and restore the prosperity of their idealized ‘people’ constructed as an economic community of hardworking ‘makers’. At the same time, these parties show

significant variance in their principal socioeconomic orientations and strategies. The RN and SVP are traditionally placed at the opposite ends of the left-right economic axis with the SVP farthest to the market liberal right and the French RN closer to the economic left (Otjes et al., 2018: 285), which makes it possible to test economic populist sovereignism for two very different cases.

Our selection has good variance on other important aspects. Our two parties of interest currently assume different status and position in their party systems. The RN has strong roots in the French extreme right and continues to be excluded from national government, while the SVP is traditionally a member of the Swiss federal government with higher responsibility in policy-making (Mazzoleni, 2018). RRPPs with a governmental profile may be inclined to moderate their populism and sovereignism and their voters may therefore be less likely to show populist and sovereignist attitudes. There are also different competitive opportunities for the supply of economic populist sovereignist politics across our two countries of interest. While the SVP is the only nationwide populist party in Switzerland (Mazzoleni, 2018), in France, populism is currently found on both sides of the party system. Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France Insoumise (LFI) represents a case of a left-wing populist party, while populism is also found to the right in the smaller right-wing sovereignist party, Nicolas Dupont-Aignan's Debout La France (DLF) (Ivaldi, 2018). The presence of other relevant populist actors may have important implications for the distribution of economic populist sovereignist attitudes and preferences across the political spectrum. There may also be variation in how such attitudes interact with policy preferences to shape political behaviour (Loew & Faas, 2019). Thus, our two cases illustrate how EPS may resonate differently across different contexts and parties.

To examine citizen's economic populist sovereignist attitudes across our two cases, we develop and test a new empirical measure. If economic populist sovereignism indeed forms a one-dimensional concept, it should be possible to construct it as a single latent attitudinal dimension which should be invariant across national contexts. Moreover, we look at how such populist sovereignist attitudes may shape political behaviour in both countries. We anticipate that RRP voters in both countries should show significantly stronger EPS attitudes compared with other political parties, independently of traditional economic cleavages and together with other correlates of RRP mobilization such as welfare chauvinism and perceived cultural threats of immigration.

To assess the relevance of economic populist sovereignism in RRP voting, it is important that we control for other socioeconomic factors as well as cultural variables. We may for instance expect RRP voters to show diverging economic preferences, which may affect their economic populist sovereignism.

More importantly, populist sovereignist claims may also concern migration problems. In RRP politics, the populist sovereignist idea is not only expressed against the political establishment but

also against ‘others’, such as immigrants (Kallis, 2018: 286-7). In the literature, RRPPs are typically associated with cultural issues like immigration and identity (Rovny & Polk, 2020). RRPPs are generally considered to operate on an exclusionist and ethno-nationalist conception of the ‘people’ primarily defined as a culturally homogenous community (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013: 167). At voter level, perceived immigration threats have been shown to be strong drivers of electoral support for RRPPs (Van der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009; Lubbers & Coenders, 2017). The impact of economic populist sovereignist attitudes on voting should therefore be gauged against the effect of cultural correlates of RRP mobilization such as welfare chauvinism and/or perceived cultural threats by immigrants.

## Data and Methods

Our data are drawn from an original comparative survey of national representative samples of citizens in France and Switzerland in April 2019 (details of the survey are presented in Appendix A1). In line with our general theoretical argument, we examine economic populist sovereignist (EPS) attitudes at the micro level and test a series of survey questions based on the core features identified above. All questions are seven-point Likert scales.

### Economic populist sovereignism (EPS)

We try and capture EPS attitudes with eight items.<sup>2</sup> The first set of items reflects the first two facets of economic populism, that is the centrality of the ‘true’ people consisting of hardworking people defined as ‘makers’ (Rathgeb 2020) —thus emphasizing the ‘moral context’ of EPS— and the risks to their well-being and interests:

- “The overall economic well-being of this country has declined”
- “Today in [COUNTRY], many economic decisions are made without considering the interests of the people”
- “In this country, one does not really care about people who work hard”

The third facet of EPS concerns the attribution of responsibility. We use items that tap into attitudes towards the national political establishment and global powers and responsibility in the decline of the well-being of the people and country:

---

<sup>2</sup> We originally started with eleven items, including two questions about European integration. However, for conceptual reasons, these were not retained in our final analysis. Additionally, we dropped a third item concerning the “need for a strong political will” which showed low correlations with the other items of EPS.

- “The government in this country does not really care about the people’s standard of living”
- “International trade agreements diminish [COUNTRY]’s sovereignty”
- “Our government does its best to defend [COUNTRY]’s interests in the world” (reverse coded)

Our last set of items covers the fourth facet which concerns the claim to recover sovereignty and national decision-making as a means to protect the interests of the people and restore their well-being.

- “Citizens should have more say in the important decisions for our country”
- “Our country should better protect itself from external economic pressures”

#### Attitudinal controls

We distinguish four sets of attitudinal controls, namely support for economic distribution, positive attitudes towards economic globalization, welfare chauvinism and the cultural perceived-threat of immigration (see Appendix A7 for details of all attitudinal scales).

#### Economic redistribution

Left/Right economic positions generally refer to a range of issues concerning state intervention, taxes, welfare and redistribution. However, the individual’s self-placement on the left/right economic axis may not necessarily be connected with all these issues. Here, we specifically focus on redistribution. Additionally, feelings of economic insecurity and deprivation may be significant factors of RRP voting, which may be associated with demands for redistribution. The following items are used to measure pro-redistribution attitudes among voters:

- “To reduce inequality, one should take from the rich to give to the poor”
- “It is the government's responsibility to ensure a decent standard of living for all”

#### Attitudes towards economic globalization

It is important that we disentangle endogenous and exogenous economic preferences. For the exogenous features, we look at attitudes toward economic globalization and use the two following items:

- “Globalization is an opportunity for economic growth in [COUNTRY]”
- “Trade with other countries leads to jobs creation”

#### Welfare chauvinism and perceived cultural threat

Immigration attitudes are a strong driver of the RRP vote. To tap into this crucial dimension, we construct a scale of welfare chauvinism—that is the belief that access to the welfare state should be restricted to natives (Betz, 1994: 173-174)—and use a single item that captures the perceived cultural threat from immigrants. Welfare chauvinism is taken from the following items:<sup>3</sup>

- “Immigration is good for the economy”
- “Immigrants bring in more than they take out”
- “Immigrants who work hard should be allowed to stay”
- “Priority should be given to nationals over foreigners for jobs”

The item for cultural threat is as follows:

- “Would you say that [COUNTRY]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries”

Drawing on recent studies of populist attitudes (Castanho Silva et al., 2019; Van Hauwaert et al., 2020), we use confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify the relationship between our items and the underlying latent construct in terms of economic populist sovereignty (Bollen, 1989). We pool the data and run multiple group CFA using ‘country’ as our grouping variable. To address possible cross-cultural bias in our comparative sample, we also test our EPS scale for configural and metric invariances across our two countries of interest.

We then turn to Item Response Theory (IRT) analysis to validate our scale of economic populist populism. IRT methodology allows to “model individual response patterns by specifying how the underlying latent traits interact with the item’s characteristics” (Chalmers, 2012:2). In particular, we test important scale properties i.e. unidimensionality, local independence of items and monotonicity.

In the next section, we look at the socio-demographic features of EPS attitudes and test linear regression models with our EPS scale as dependent variable. Finally, in order to establish the effect of EPS on voting preference in our two countries, we conduct a series of logistic regressions, including

---

<sup>3</sup> Wherever needed, we reverse code items so that high values correspond with the same type of response on every item of the scale.

standard sociodemographic controls (age, gender and education) as well as our four attitudinal variables.<sup>4</sup> Our DV is voting intention in a general election. The RRP —i.e. the RN in France and the SVP in Switzerland— is contrasted with all other parties. Our main IV is the IRT score of EPS estimated from a Graded Response Model (GRM). Since we are primarily interested in vote choice, non-voters and non-responses are excluded from the models, resulting in final analytical samples of 920 French and 1,172 Swiss voters. In France, we test additional models contrasting the RN to non-populist parties to control for the presence of other relevant populist actors in the French party system.

## Results

### EPS attitudes in France and Switzerland

We start by examining the distribution and descriptive statistics of individual items in the scale in both countries (see Table 1 and Figure 1). As can be seen from Figure 1, economic populist sovereignist attitudes are widespread among French and Swiss voters. In France, in particular, six of the eight EPS items have a mean of 5.5 or higher on a seven-point scale. These findings suggest that EPS ideas and values are neither ‘extreme’ nor alien to mainstream attitudes and that they may be shared by large swathes of voters in Western democracies. As regards our two cases, such popularity of EPS attitudes may also reflect the size of electoral support for populist parties. In the 2019 Federal elections, the Swiss SVP won over a quarter of the vote; in France, in the 2017 elections, populist candidates across the board totalled no less than 46% of the presidential vote.

Moreover, looking at the electoral success of RRP parties in Western Europe, Mudde (2010) argues convincingly that such parties are “better perceived as a pathological normalcy (...) well connected to mainstream ideas and much in tune with broadly shared mass attitudes and policy positions (...) The empirical argument, Mudde adds, is that key aspects of the populist radical right ideology are shared by the mainstream, both at the elite and mass level, albeit often in a more moderate form” (2010: 1178).

Table 1 about here

Figure 1 about here

---

<sup>4</sup> Welfare chauvinism, economic redistribution and positive attitudes towards globalization form homogeneous attitudinal scales, as the reliability and scalability coefficients show (see Appendix A7.1). Let us recall that perception of cultural immigration threat is measured with a single item.

## Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We test our EPS scale using multiple group confirmatory factor analysis (MG-CFA) with a maximum likelihood (MLE) estimator, using ‘country’ as our grouping variable (see Appendix A2).<sup>5</sup> In France, some of the EPS items are negatively skewed (skewness < -1), with most respondents clustering around the higher values, which may produce higher standard errors for scalability coefficients. Additionally, CFA assumes at least interval data that are multivariate normally distributed and heavily skewed data might be problematic. We use a Bartlett’s test to check that our data have a multivariate normal distribution and calculate KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) values to check factorability further. In both France and Switzerland, the Bartlett’s test of sphericity finds significant correlations across all items and the test is significant at the 0.01 level. KMOs are 0.90 and 0.88 in France and Switzerland, respectively, indicating that both sets of data are suitable for factor analysis. All KMO measures of individual variables are also above 0.85 in both countries. We find similar results in the pooled dataset.

The CFA fit statistics confirm that the data are consistent with the hypothesized scale structure. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.07, which suggests reasonable error of approximation. A rule of thumb is that  $RMSEA \leq 0.05$  indicates close approximate fit, values between 0.05 and 0.08 suggest reasonable error of approximation and are deemed acceptable and  $RMSEA \geq 0.10$  suggests poor fit (Kline 2005: 139). In our model, the upper bound of the RMSEA CI is 0.08 and does not exceed the 0.10 cut-off for poor fit.

Figure 2 about here

The model shows good fit on the other statistics. RMSR is below 0.05 (at 0.04), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.95 and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.96, both equal to or above the recommended 0.95 cut-off. Parameter estimates support the convergent validity of the one-factor solution. All items load significantly on the factor ( $>0.4$ ) (see Figure 2). Average loadings are higher in France (0.66) than in Switzerland (0.60), with minimum loadings of 0.48 and 0.44, respectively.

To assess whether our EPS scale has the same measurement properties in our two samples, we run invariance tests. The EPS scale shows configural invariance across the French and Swiss samples: factor loadings are all significant and in the same direction across both countries (see Figure 2). We test for metric invariance and run a model in which factor loadings are forced to be equal across countries. The chi-square difference suggests that the model fits significantly worse in the more restricted model (Diff.  $\chi^2=95$ ;  $df=7$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). However, the chi-square is sample size dependent and it might be preferable to examine changes in other fit indicators such as CFI and RMSEA (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016). Here, the fit indicators of the more restricted model show only a negligible deterioration in CFI (0.01) and

---

<sup>5</sup> Statistical analysis is conducted in R using the relevant packages (Lavaan, semTools, mirt).

RMSEA (0.002), all below the commonly accepted cut-off of 0.01, which indicates that metric invariance across the French and Swiss samples can be accepted for our EPS scale.

### IRT Analysis

We use IRT analysis to assess further the measurement validity of our EPS scale. We examine several additional properties and check in particular IRT assumptions of unidimensionality, local independence and monotonicity. Unidimensionality means that only one latent variable is required to explain the association between item scores. Here we examine whether our items actually measure a single dimension i.e. our underlying construct of our EPS scale and do so for each of our two countries individually.

In France, the coefficient of homogeneity for the scale is 0.47 (s.e.=0.013), well above the 0.3 cut-off, suggesting a ‘moderate’ scale. All item  $H_i$  scalability coefficients are above the 0.3 threshold (see Appendix A3). Standard errors are very small due to large sample size and the 95% confidence intervals around the value of  $H_i$  do not include the lower bound cut-off. In Switzerland, the coefficient for the scale is 0.39 (s.e.=0.012) which is just below the 0.4 mark for a ‘moderate’ scale, thus suggesting a ‘weak’ scale. All individual Swiss items have coefficients above 0.3 with the exception of  $H_i$  for the item “our government does its best to defend Switzerland’s interests in the world”, which is just below at 0.29.

Another important property of IRT scales is local independence (conditional association) which implies that items are associated only via the latent dimension. Van Hauwaert et al. (2020) suggest running bootstrapped polychoric correlations to test for possible local dependencies. In both countries, correlations are significant and positive for each of the 28 pairs of items and —with the exception of one pair in the French data— they are all below 0.8, which indicates moderate correlations and local independence (see Appendix A4). Inter-item correlations are lower on average in Switzerland, in particular concerning the item “our government does its best to defend Switzerland’s interests in the world”. Average item to total correlations is 0.61 in France and 0.55 in Switzerland. These values indicate that our items can be combined in a harmonised scale (Van Hauwaert et al., 2020: 18).

Finally, we test the EPS scale for monotonicity i.e. that the probability of endorsing a ‘correct’ response option increases with increasing levels of the latent construct. We use a minvi value of 0.03, recommended for large samples. Details are summarised in Appendix A5. In France, the scale shows only one set of serious violations of monotonicity for the item “International trade agreements diminish France’s sovereignty”, where the value of the crit statistic exceeds 40 (crit=62). No other significant violation of monotonicity is found across the French items and none is found in the Swiss data.

Overall, our findings confirm that EPS can be constructed as a single latent attitudinal dimension. The scale has high internal coherence in both countries and meets IRT assumptions of unidimensionality, local independence of items and monotonicity. In each country, we compute an IRT score of EPS, which we estimate from a Graded Response Model (GRM) for polytomous items (see Appendix A6).

#### Socio-demographic variables

The literature suggests that RRPPs typically draw their support from men, older voters and those with lower levels of education (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Here we look at socio-demographic variables to try and assert if the groups normally associated with RRP party support score higher on our EPS scale. We run linear regression models for both countries using our IRT score of EPS as dependent variable. We include three predictors that are traditionally associated with the RRP, namely gender, age—including a squared term to control for possible curvilinear effects—and educational attainment recoded into three categories (no secondary education, completed secondary education, and university degree) (see Table 2).

Table 2 about here

In both countries, the socio-demographic models confirm that EPS attitudes are more pronounced among voters with lower levels of education, which is consistent with other studies of populism in the European context (e.g. Rovira Kaltwasser & Van Hauwaert, 2020). Age shows a curvilinear effect: EPS attitudes are stronger among voters within a 30-60 years age band, and are much less pronounced among younger and older voters. Finally, unlike the typical over-representation of men in RRP electoral support, our models show that women hold stronger EPS attitudes compared with men. This suggests that EPS attitudes may be independent from the nativist and authoritarian features of the RRP, which are important drivers of the traditional gender gap in the radical right (Harteveld et al., 2015).

#### EPS and RRP voting

We anticipated above that EPS attitudes should be significant drivers of RRP voting in France and Switzerland and that they should exert their effect alongside well established correlates of the RRP vote such as welfare chauvinism and perception of cultural threat of immigration, as well as independent from voter preferences for domestic and foreign economic policies (see Appendix A7 for all attitudinal scales).

A bivariate analysis suggests that both RN and SVP voters have statistically stronger EPS attitudes compared with other political parties (see Figure 3). In France, RN voters show the highest level of EPS, together with supporters of the small right-wing populist party *Debout la France* (DLF), as well as among voters of the left-wing populist *La France Insoumise* (LFI). In Switzerland, SVP supporters clearly show higher scores on the EPS scale compared with supporters of all other Swiss parties. There are no significant differences between other parties in terms of their EPS. It is also worth noting that citizens not willing to vote and those saying they would cast a blank ballot are closer to SVP supporters on the EPS scale.

Figure 3 about here

Multivariate logistic regression analysis confirms those findings. The first (base) model includes our IRT scale of EPS, as well as sociodemographic variables and left-right self-placement as control indicators. In both countries, it appears that EPS attitudes exert a significant positive impact on voting for the RN and the SVP (see Table 3). The effect of EPS is substantial: calculating average marginal effects (AMEs) for EPS in both countries shows that an increase of one standard deviation in EPS produces an elevation of about 10% in the predicted probability of voting for the RN in France and just under 8% in the Swiss case.

Table 3 about here

Turning to the full model with all attitudinal controls, the results for both countries corroborate that RRPP voting is significantly influenced by general ideological orientations. RRP voters in both countries show significantly stronger welfare chauvinist attitudes and they are also more likely to situate themselves to the right of the political spectrum (see Figure 4), which is in line with the general literature on RRP voting (Rooduijn, 2018b).

EPS attitudes continue to exert a significant albeit reduced positive effect on voting for the RN and the SVP, when controlling for standard sociodemographic indicators of age, gender and education, left/right self-placement and other correlates of RRP voting such as welfare-chauvinism. In the full attitudinal model, average marginal effects for EPS attitudes are down to 5% and 6% in France and Switzerland, respectively (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 about here

While the effect size of EPS is reduced by the introduction of control attitudinal variables, EPS attitudes remain however statistically significant across both countries, most evidently in the Swiss case. Predicted probabilities are plotted in the upper panel of figure 5 and show an increase across levels of EPS in both countries. The effect of EPS is less pronounced in the French case, however, with larger CIs. This may partly be accounted for by the presence of other populist voters in France both to the left (LFI) and right (DLF) of the spectrum which, as noted earlier, show higher levels of EPS attitudes, similar to RN voters. A model contrasting RN voters with mainstream supporters only –excluding other populist voters– suggests a stronger effect of EPS, as illustrated in the probability plot in the bottom left panel of Figure 5.

Figure 5 about here

Turning to the other variables in the full model, our results suggest that RRPP supporters in both countries diverge in both their endogenous and exogenous economic preferences (see Figure 4). In Switzerland, SVP voters show more right-wing liberal economic preferences, opposing redistribution, while in France, RN voters show greater support for redistributive policies. The results also corroborate that EPS should not be taken simply as a proxy for attitudes towards globalization, as both predictors exert their distinct and significant effect on the probability of voting for RRPPs in our two countries. RN voters exhibit negative attitudes towards globalization and international trade. Attitudes towards globalisation have no statistically significant effect on voting for the SVP in Switzerland, which may be partly accounted for by the relevance of more liberal economic policy preferences among SVP supporters.

Finally, we anticipated that EPS would exert a significant impact on voting, independently of the cultural dimension of RRP voting. In the full model, we test for the addition of the perception by respondents of a cultural threat of immigration. As expected, the cultural threat has a strong effect on the probability of voting for both the RN and SVP, which is in line with previous research (Van der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009; Lubbers & Coenders, 2017). However, the effect of EPS remains statistically significant when including the cultural dimension of immigration (see full model with cultural threat, third column in Table 3).

As additional robustness checks, we consider alternative specifications. We control the effect of our main variable of interest for other correlates of RRP and populist voting, namely authoritarianism, political efficacy —both internal and external— and opposition to the EU. Additionally, we consider social attitudes regarding sexual orientations, as these may reflect an important part of the ‘nostalgia’ to which RRPPs appeal.

Authoritarianism is taken from the item “What our country really needs instead of more ‘civil rights’ is a good stiff dose of law and order”; internal efficacy is taken from the item “How often do politics and government seem so complicated that you personally can't really understand what's going on?” External efficacy is measured from the item “How much can people like you affect what the government does?”. Opposition to the EU is taken from “There should be more power for [COUNTRY], less for the EU”. Finally, social attitudes regarding sexual orientations are measured from the item “Homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle”.

In both countries, the significance of the EPS scale remains unchanged. We control for heteroskedasticity and run similar models with robust standard errors (HC1), which also confirm our findings.<sup>6</sup> Finally, in France, as noted earlier, the effect of EPS is statistically significant and stronger across all models contrasting the RN with ‘non-populist’ parties i.e. Greens, Socialists, LREM and Republicans —excluding other populist voters on the left (LFI) and right (DLF) from the analytical sample.

## Discussion

The analysis in this paper corroborates the fact that economic populist sovereignty (EPS) forms a consistently salient and coherent set of attitudes related to citizens’ values and voting preferences. Such ideas and values are not ‘extreme’ or marginal and they are connected with more broadly shared mass attitudes. We find evidence that significant groups of citizens feel that they have been betrayed by political elites and outsiders and that the economic well-being of the community of the ‘true’ people is at risk. Citizens who share those views support claims that their country needs to ‘take back control’ against supranational powers and influences and that the sovereignty of the people should be reinstated, thus illustrating the core features of our concept of economic populist sovereignty.

Our empirical analysis confirms that economic populist sovereignty may be operationalized as a single latent attitudinal dimension and that it is a significant factor in electoral support for the RRP. Whilst widespread among voters both mainstream and radical, EPS attitudes have however a substantial effect on RRP voting, alongside other socioeconomic and cultural correlates of RRP voting such as immigration and welfare chauvinism.

In our view, the approach developed in this paper has a number of implications for our general understanding of RRP mobilization cross-nationally. First, this paper contributes to current debates about the need for more theoretically enriched accounts of populism. As Dean and Maiguashca (2020) argue, “it is only through detailed, context specific empirical research and careful conceptual reflection

---

<sup>6</sup> We also replicate our analysis by pooling the French and Swiss data, introducing country as fixed effects and find similar results across all models.

that we might discover what the unique features of populism, if any, consist in” (p.12). Here the main theoretical focus is on the intersection between populism and sovereignty. While mostly exploratory in orientation and while we agree the degree of covariation and centrality of populism and sovereignty may vary among parties and voters across context, our survey seems to lend support to claims that sovereignty may represent a ‘natural’ correlate of populism, whereby popular and national sovereignty may be articulated with one another to express the idea of regaining control of the country on behalf of the imagined community of the ‘true people’ which, as our analysis suggests, is not necessarily conceptualized in ethnocultural terms.

In this sense, this contribution provides empirical evidence that populist sovereignist attitudes are not linked exclusively to cultural concerns about immigration and national identity, but also possibly with feelings of economic insecurity and ‘nostalgic deprivation’. RRP voters share the idea that the people’s well-being has declined over time and that it is under threat from such external forces as immigrants, cosmopolitan elites and international institutions. They support claims of popular and national ‘sovereignty’ not only as a cultural but also as an economic response to the challenges of the global economy, and as a means of restoring the prosperity of the economic community of hardworking ‘producers’.

Second, this paper confirms the current literature that argues that RRP economics are best captured by such parties’ core populist radical-right ideology, less so by traditional left-right economic issues (Otjes et al., 2018; Rathgeb, 2020), at both party and voter level, as the analysis in this paper suggests. Discordant positions on economic redistribution, in particular amongst RN and SVP voters, seem to support the idea that the traditional opposition between ‘state’ and ‘market’ may have limited explanatory power as regards the current wave of RRPPs’ success across Europe and that the politicization of socioeconomic issues by those parties may cross-cut traditional economic cleavages (Rathgeb, 2020; Attewell, 2020). These findings on the demand-side confirm that the Swiss SVP and French RN are situated at the two opposite ends of the market-state economic dimension (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020).

Third, this paper contributes to the literature that looks at mass attitudes amongst voters in relation to RRP supply. Our findings corroborate Mudde’s (2010) argument that “the success and failure of populist radical right parties is, first and foremost, explained by the struggle over issue saliency and positions” (p.1179). The study of the link between EPS mass attitudes and RRP party ideology is beyond the scope of this paper but our findings seem to support the idea that RRP parties may be successful in shifting voters to ‘their’ issues, away from traditional socio-economic issues, like state intervention for instance. Future research should examine more closely the interplay between the supply and demand-side of RRP populist sovereignist mobilization, although this is clearly, neither theoretically nor empirically, not an easy task.

Our results also suggest the relevance of a value analysis on economic concerns as such. What lies at the heart of economic populist sovereignism is a specific set of values that provide the context of economic activity, a transcendent vision of the ‘good’ which reflects a specific value orientation. Meanwhile, this orientation seems to recover a form of populist right-wing ‘moral economy’, as a set of values and the beliefs aiming to defend a specific community, ‘traditional rights and customs’ future or remembered from the past” (Carrier 2018: 22). The concept of moral economy would be also useful for bridging with some recent work on values and beliefs by supporters of right-wing populism, based upon ethnographic methodologies (Hochschild 2016; Cramer 2016).

Finally, our results for France and Switzerland strongly suggest moving beyond the two Western European cases selected to examine the electoral relevance of EPS attitudes further across different actors and contexts, such as Viktor Orban’s Hungary and, most evidently, the United States where populist and sovereignist narratives dominate Donald Trump’s rhetoric. Donald Trump’s ‘America first’ in the 2016 Presidential campaign was emblematic of such a vision and claims to prioritize the national sovereignty and domestic interests of the American people against global rules and institutions (Berenson, 2016). Similarly, Hay (2020) reminds us that the combination of political disaffection, sovereignty claims and socioeconomic dislocation was, for instance, a crucial factor in the vote for Brexit in the UK in 2016. As an avenue for future research, our empirical exercise could certainly be applied to a wider set of cases to test further the robustness of EPS. Furthermore, the French results in this paper seem to indicate that EPS attitudes may develop not only on the right but also on the left of the political spectrum in articulation with other sets of beliefs and values. Future research should further explore the relevance and impact of economic sovereignism among a greater variety of populist actors across the political spectrum and the extent to which economic populist sovereignist claims may resonate with other, potentially more diverse groups of voters across Western democracies.

## References

- Afonso A & Rennwald L (2018) Social class and the changing welfare state agenda of radical right parties in Europe. In Manow P, Palier C & Schwander H (eds) *Welfare Democracies and Party Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 171-196
- Attewell D. (2020) Deservingness perceptions, welfare state support and vote choice in Western Europe. *West European Politics*, DOI: 10.1080/01402382.2020.1715704
- Basile L & Mazzoleni O (2020) Sovereignist wine in populist bottles. An Introduction, *European Politics and Society*, 21:2, 151-162.

- Basile L, Borri R & Verzichelli L (2020) For whom the sovereignist bell tolls? Individual determinants of support for sovereignism in ten European countries. *European Politics and Society* 21: 2, 235-257.
- Berenson T (2016) Read Donald Trump's speech on jobs and the economy, *Time*, 15 September, <http://time.com/4495507/donald-trump-economy-speechtranscript>, accessed 29 January 2020
- Betz H G (1994) *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Betz H G & Johnson C (2004) Against the current — stemming the tide: the nostalgic ideology of the contemporary radical populist right, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 9:3, 311-327
- Betz H-G & Meret S (2013) Right-wing populist parties and the working-class vote: what have you done for us lately? In J. Rydgren (ed) *Class Politics and the Radical Right* London: Routledge, 107-121
- Bollen K A (1989) *Structural Equations with Latent Variables*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley
- Bonikowski B, Halikiopoulou D, Kaufmann E & Rooduijn M (2019) Populism and nationalism in a comparative perspective: a scholarly exchange, *Nations and Nationalism*, 25:1, 58-81
- Brubaker R (2020) Populism and nationalism, *Nations and Nationalism*, 26:1, 44-66.
- Canovan M (2005) *The People*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Carrier, J G (2018) Moral economy: what's in a name, *Anthropological Theory*, 18:1, 18–35.
- Castanho Silva B, Jungkunz S, Helbling M & Littvay L (2019) An empirical comparison of seven populist attitudes scales, *Political Research Quarterly*, online first, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912919833176>
- Chalmers R P (2012) A Multidimensional Item Response Theory Package for the R Environment, *Journal of Statistical Software*, 48:6, 2-29
- Chrysogelos A (2020) State transformation and populism: from the internationalized to the neo-sovereign state? *Politics*, 40:1, 22-37.
- Ciuk DJ, Lupton RN and Thornton JR (2018) “Values Voters: The Conditional Effect of Income on the Relationship Between Core Values and Political Attitudes and Behavior”. *Political Psychology*, 39(4): 869-888.
- Cramer J K (2016) *The Politics of Resentment. Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press
- Dean J & B Maignushca (2020) Did somebody say populism? Towards a renewal and reorientation of populism studies. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 25:1, 11-27
- De Cleen, B & Stavrakakis Y (2017) Distinctions and articulations: a discourse theoretical framework for the study of populism and nationalism, *Javnost - The Public*, 24:4, 301-319
- Dubet F (2019) *Le temps des passions tristes*. Paris: Seuil
- Eger A M & Valdez S (2015) Neo-nationalism in Western Europe. *European Sociological Review*, 31:1, 115-130
- Gest J, Reny T & Mayer J (2018) Roots of the radical right: nostalgic deprivation in the United States and Britain, *Comparative Political Studies*, 51:13, 1694–1719.
- Guiso L, Herrera H, Morelli M et al. (2017) Demand and supply of populism. CEPR Discussion Paper no. DP 11871, February. IGIER – Università Bocconi, Milan
- Harteveld, E., Van Der Brug, W., Dahlberg S. & A. Kokkonen (2015) The gender gap in populist radical-right voting: examining the demand side in Western and Eastern Europe, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49:1-2, 103–134
- Harteveld, E (2016) Winning the 'losers' but losing the 'winners'. the electoral consequences of the radical right moving to the economic left. *Electoral Studies*, 44, 225-234

- Hay, C (2020) Brexistential angst and the paradoxes of populism: on the contingency, predictability and intelligibility of seismic shifts. *Political Studies*, 68:1, 187–206
- Ibsen, M F (2019) The populist conjuncture: legitimation crisis in the age of globalized capitalism. *Political Studies*, 67:3, 795–811
- Helleiner E & Pickel A (2005) *Economic Nationalism in a Globalizing World*, Itacha/London: Cornell University Press
- Heinisch R, Werner A & Habersack K (2019) Reclaiming national sovereignty: the case of the conservatives and the far right in Austria, *European Politics and Society*. doi: 10.1080/23745118.2019.1632577
- Hochschild A R (2016) *Strangers in Their Own Land*, New York, The New Press
- Kline R B (2005) *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modelling*, NY: Guilford
- Ichijo A (2009) Sovereignty and nationalism in the twenty-first century: the Scottish case', *Ethnopolitics*, 8:2, 155-172
- Ivaldi G (2018) Populism in France. In Stockemer D (ed) *Populism around the World: A Comparative Perspective*. Cham: Springer, 27-48
- Ivaldi G & Mazzoleni O (2020) Economic populism and sovereigntism. The economic supply of European radical right-wing populist parties, *European Politics and Society*, 21:2, 202-218.
- Kallis A (2018) Populism, sovereigntism and the unlikely re-emergence of the territorial nation-state, *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11:3, 285-302
- Kitschelt H & McGann A J (1995) *The radical right in Western Europe. A comparative analysis*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press
- Ignazi P (2006) The silent counter-revolution, *European Journal of Political Research* 22:1, 3-34
- Inglehart R (2018) *Cultural Evolution: People's Motivations Are Changing and Reshaping the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Laclau E (2005) *On Populist Reason*. London & New York: Verso
- Lefkofridi, Z & Michel E (2014) The electoral politics of solidarity. the welfare state agendas of radical right. In K Banting & W Kymlicka (eds) *The Strains of Commitment. The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 233-267.
- Loew N & Thorsten F (2019) Between thin- and host-ideologies: how populist attitudes interact with policy preferences in shaping voting behaviour, *Representation*, 55:4, 493-511.
- Lubbers M & Coenders M (2017) Nationalistic attitudes and voting for the radical right in Europe. *European Union Politics*, 18(1), 98-118
- Maier CS (2016) *Once Within Borders. Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*. Harvard: Harvard University Press
- Mazzoleni O (2018) Political achievements, party system changes and government participation: the case of the 'new' Swiss People's Party. Un A Zaslove, S Wolinetz (eds) *Absorbing the Blow. Populist Parties and their Impact on Parties and Party Systems*. London: Rowman & Littlefield/ECPR Press, 83-102
- Mény Y & Surel Y (2000) *Par le peuple, pour le peuple. Le populisme et la démocratie*. Paris: Fayard.
- Mudde C (2007) *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mudde C (2010) The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy, *West European Politics*, 33:6, 1167-1186.
- Mudde C & Rovira Kaltwasser C (2013) Exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism: comparing contemporary Europe and Latin America. *Government and Opposition*, 48:2, 147-174.
- Norris P & Inglehart R (2019) *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Otjes S, Ivaldi G, Ravik Jupskås A & Mazzoleni O (2018) It's not economic interventionism, stupid! Reassessing the political economy of radical right-wing populist parties, *Swiss Political Science Review*, 24:3, 270-290.
- Putnick D L & Bornstein M H (2016) Measurement invariance conventions and reporting: the state of the art and future directions for psychological research. *Developmental Review*, 41, 71–90.
- Rathgeb P (2020) Makers against takers: the socio-economic ideology and policy of the Austrian Freedom Party. *West European Politics*, DOI: 10.1080/01402382.2020.1720400.
- Rohan M J (2000) A Rose by Any Name? The Values Construct, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4(3), 255–277.
- Rodrik D (2018) Populism and the economics of globalization. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1:1-2, 12-33.
- Rooduijn M (2018a) State of the field: How to study populism and adjacent topics? A plea for both more and less focus, *European Journal of Political Research*, 58: 362–372.
- Rooduijn M (2018b) What unites the voter bases of populist parties? Comparing the electorates of 15 populist parties, *European Political Science Review*, 10:3, 351-368.
- Rovira Kaltwasser, C., & Van Hauwaert, S. (2020) The populist citizen: Empirical evidence from Europe and Latin America, *European Political Science Review*, 12:1, 1-18.
- Rovny J & Polk J (2020) Still blurry? Economic salience, position and voting for radical right parties in Western Europe, *European Journal of Political Research*, 59:2, 248-268.
- Rydgren J (2017) Radical right-wing parties in Europe. What's populism got to do with it? *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16:4, 485-496.
- Sassen S (2015) *Losing control? Sovereignty in an age of globalization*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Seawright J & Gerring J (2008) Case selection techniques in case study research: a menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political Research Quarterly* 61:2, 294-308.
- Steenvoorden E & Harteveld E (2018) The appeal of nostalgia: the influence of societal pessimism on support for populist radical right parties, *West European Politics*, 41:1, 28-52.
- Thompson E P (1971) The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century, *Past & Present* 50: 76–136.
- Toplišek A (2018) *The political economy of the contemporary rise of populism in western democracies*, SOAS University of London, Working Paper.
- Van Deth J W & Scarbrough E (1998) *The Impact of Values*. Oxford: OUP.
- Van der Brug W & Van Spanje J (2009) Immigration, Europe and the 'new' cultural dimension, *European Journal of Political Research* 48:3, 309-334.
- Van Hauwaert S M, Schimpf C H & Azevedo F (2020) The measurement of populist attitudes: Testing cross-national scales using item response theory, *Politics*, 40:1, 3-21.
- Verzichelli L (2020) Conclusions. The populism-sovereignism linkage: findings, theoretical implications and a new research agenda, *European Politics and Society*, 21:2, 258-270.

# Tables and figures

Table 1. Summary statistics for the Economic Populist Sovereignism items

		Min	Max	France			Switzerland		
				Mean	sd	Skew	Mean	sd	Skew
EcoPop1	The government in this country does not really care about the people's living standard	1	7	5.79	1.54	-1.24	4.80	1.72	-0.40
EcoPop2	The overall economic well-being of this country has declined	1	7	5.74	1.47	-1.18	4.55	1.72	-0.26
EcoPop4	Citizens should have more say in the important decisions for our country	1	7	5.80	1.44	-1.16	5.39	1.44	-0.66
EcoPop5	In this country, one does not really care about people who work hard	1	7	5.69	1.53	-1.18	4.86	1.67	-0.49
EcoPop6	Today in COUNTRY, many economic decisions are made without considering the interests of the people	1	7	5.89	1.43	-1.33	5.20	1.52	-0.62
EcoSov3	International trade agreements diminish COUNTRY's sovereignty	1	7	4.76	1.76	-0.45	4.01	1.76	-0.06
EcoSov5	Our country should better protect itself from external economic pressures	1	7	5.78	1.33	-0.97	5.08	1.54	-0.54
EcoSov6	Our government does its best to defend COUNTRY's interests in the world	1	7	4.62	1.85	-0.22	3.74	1.62	0.33

Figure 1. Distribution of Economic populist sovereignist items in France and Switzerland

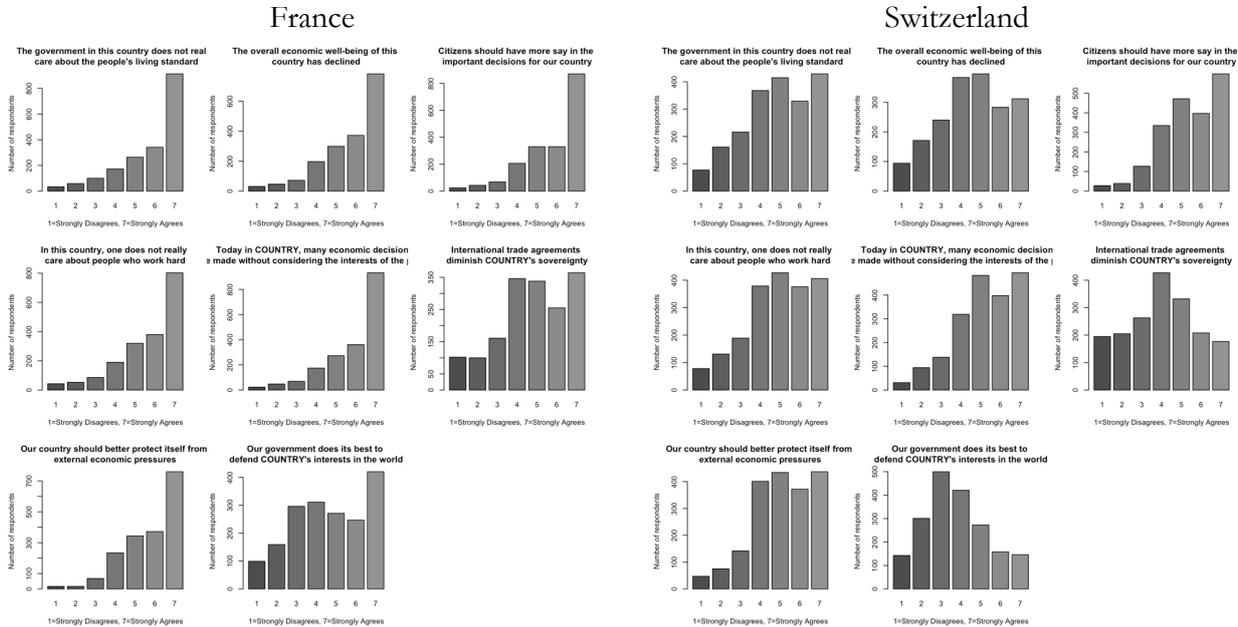


Table 2. The socio-demographic profile of economic populist sovereignty

	France	Switzerland
Female (ref=male)	0.21 (0.04)***	0.08 (0.04)*
Age (continuous)	0.04 (0.01)***	0.06 (0.00)***
Age squared	-0.00 (0.00)***	-0.00 (0.00)***
Education Bac (ref=Less than Bac)	-0.17 (0.05)**	-0.33 (0.06)***
Education +Bac (ref=Less than Bac)	-0.36 (0.05)***	-0.46 (0.04)***
Intercept	-0.88 (0.19)***	-1.23 (0.17)***
Observations	1911	2039
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.09

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001  
 IRT Score of EPS  
 Std errors in brackets

Notes:

Table 3. Multivariate logistic regressions of RRP voting in France and Switzerland

Binary Logistic Regressions: support for the RN in France			
	RN vs. all other parties		
	Base Model	Full Model	Full Model with cult.Threat
Female (ref=male)	-0.30 (0.18)	-0.24 (0.21)	-0.32 (0.21)
Age (cont.)	-0.03 (0.01) <sup>***</sup>	-0.03 (0.01) <sup>***</sup>	-0.04 (0.01) <sup>***</sup>
Education Bac (ref=Less than Bac)	-0.31 (0.22)	-0.26 (0.26)	-0.21 (0.26)
Education +Bac (ref=Less than Bac)	-0.95 (0.23) <sup>***</sup>	-0.72 (0.26) <sup>**</sup>	-0.74 (0.27) <sup>**</sup>
Left-Right Scale	0.45 (0.04) <sup>***</sup>	0.42 (0.05) <sup>***</sup>	0.40 (0.05) <sup>***</sup>
Eco. Populist Sovereignism (IRT)	0.92 (0.10) <sup>***</sup>	0.47 (0.14) <sup>***</sup>	0.36 (0.14) <sup>**</sup>
Welfare Chauvinism		0.55 (0.09) <sup>***</sup>	0.24 (0.11) <sup>*</sup>
Redistribution		0.27 (0.08) <sup>***</sup>	0.31 (0.08) <sup>***</sup>
Globalization		-0.21 (0.07) <sup>**</sup>	-0.19 (0.07) <sup>**</sup>
Cultural Threat Immigrants			0.37 (0.09) <sup>***</sup>
Intercept	-2.08 (0.42) <sup>***</sup>	-4.77 (0.88) <sup>***</sup>	-5.24 (0.91) <sup>***</sup>
Likelihood ratio (LR) test	376.06	400,49	417,33
dl	6	9	10
Prob.Chi <sup>2</sup>	< 0,001	< 0,001	< 0,001
Observations	920	920	920
Log Likelihood	-401.00	-306,00	-296,00
Akaike Inf. Crit.	817.00	632,00	614,00
Notes:	* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001		
	Voting intention		
	Std errors in brackets		

Binary Logistic Regressions: support for the SVP in Switzerland

	SVP vs. all other parties		
	Base Model	Full Model	Full Model with cult.Threat
Female (ref=male)	-0.36 (0.17)*	-0.32 (0.19)	-0.38 (0.19)*
Age (cont.)	-0.01 (0.005)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Education Bac (ref=Less than Bac)	-0.66 (0.24)**	-0.71 (0.26)**	-0.65 (0.26)*
Education +Bac (ref=Less than Bac)	-0.81 (0.18)***	-0.87 (0.20)***	-0.81 (0.20)***
Left-Right Scale	0.63 (0.04)***	0.52 (0.05)***	0.49 (0.05)***
Eco. Populist Sovereignism (IRT)	0.61 (0.09)***	0.52 (0.11)***	0.43 (0.12)***
Welfare Chauvinism		0.69 (0.09)***	0.45 (0.11)***
Redistribution		-0.22 (0.06)***	-0.18 (0.06)**
Globalization		0,02 (0,07)	0,02 (0,07)
Cultural threat Immigrants			0,28 (0,06)***
Intercept	-3.86 (0.38)***	-4.91 (0.73)***	-5.21 (0.75)***
Likelihood ratio (LR) test	469.16	495.28	512.29
dl	6	9	10
Prob.Chi <sup>2</sup>	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001
Observations	1172	1172	1172
Log Likelihood	-527.00	-435.00	-425.00
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1068.00	890.00	872.00

Notes:

\* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001

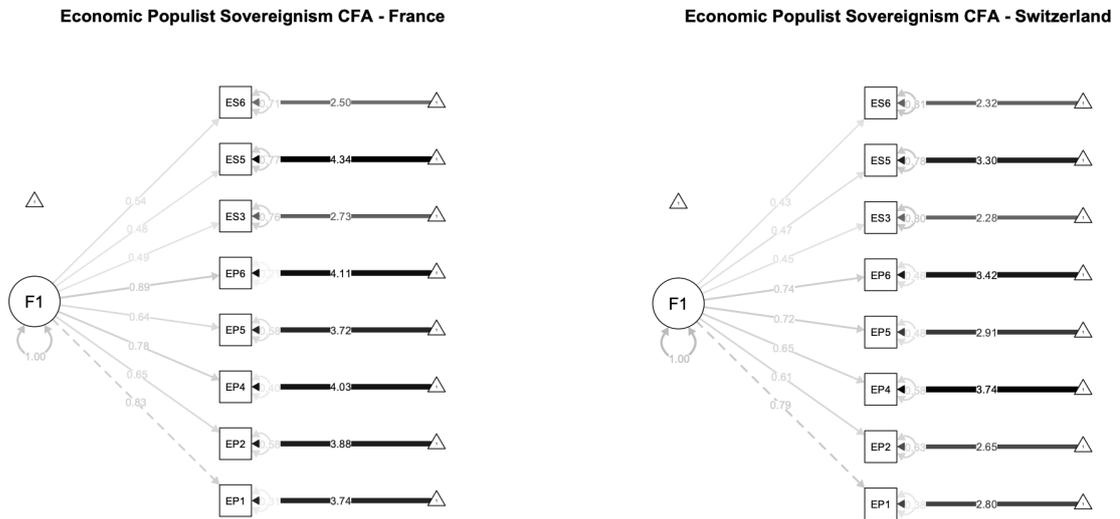
Voting intention

Std errors in brackets

Figure 2. Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MGCFA): factor loadings, variances and intercepts

France

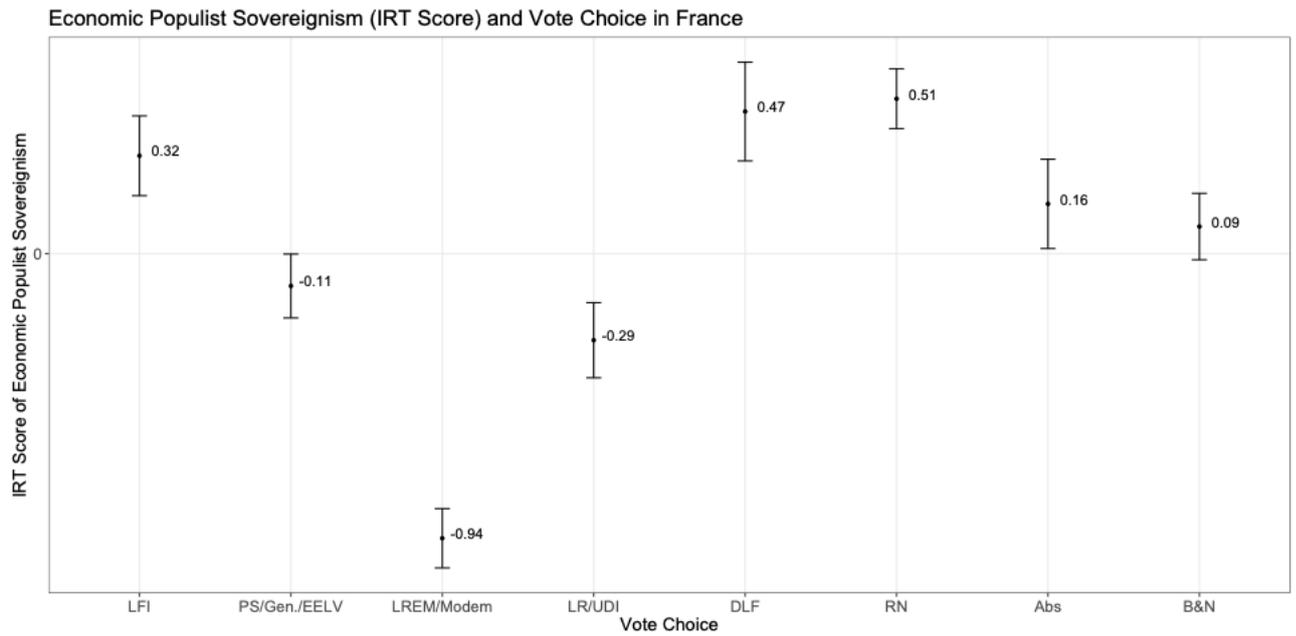
Switzerland



Note: All paths and variances are significant at  $p < 0.01$

Figure 3. EPS and voting preferences

France



Switzerland

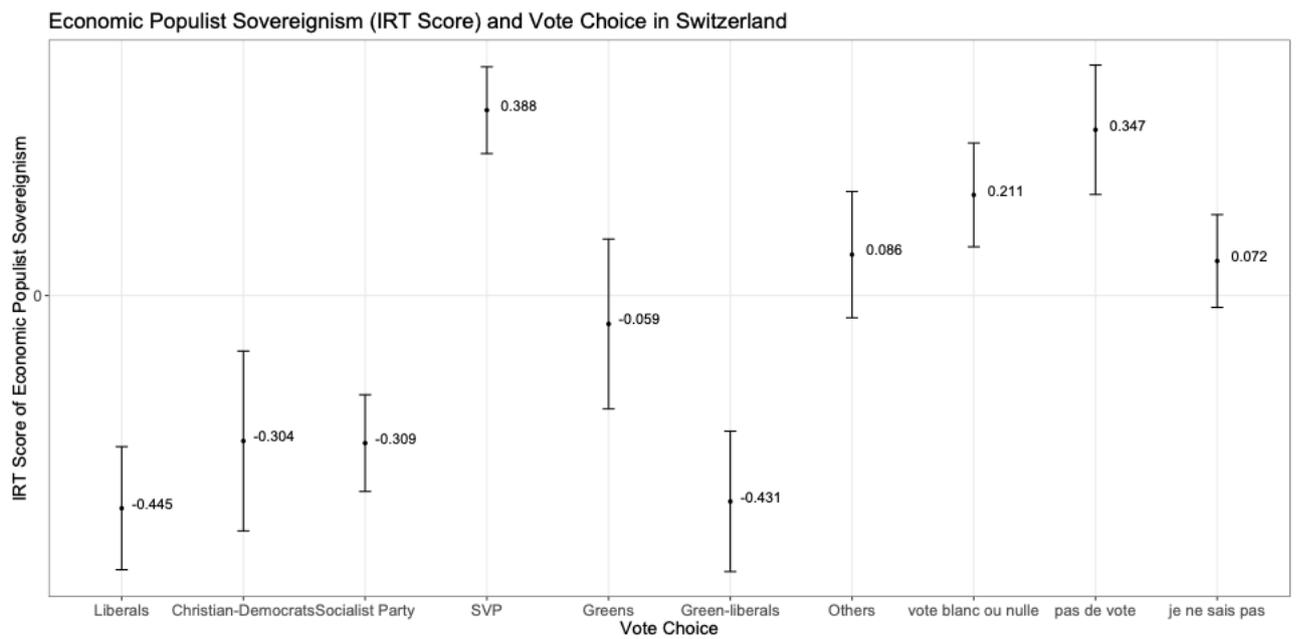
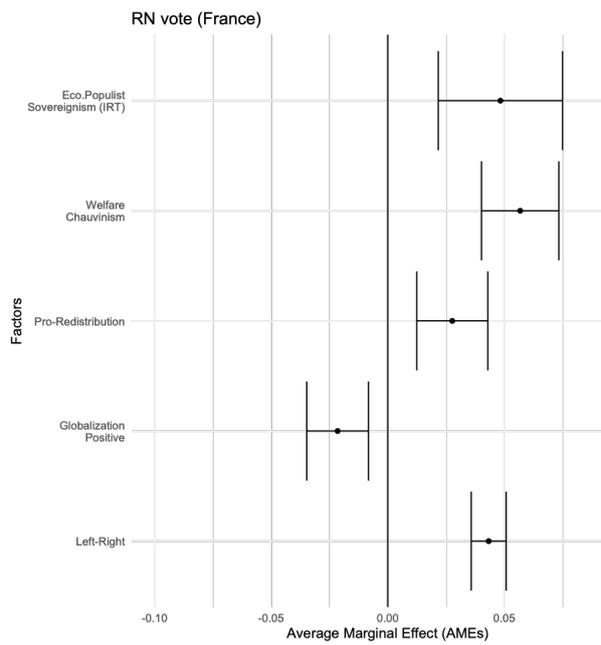
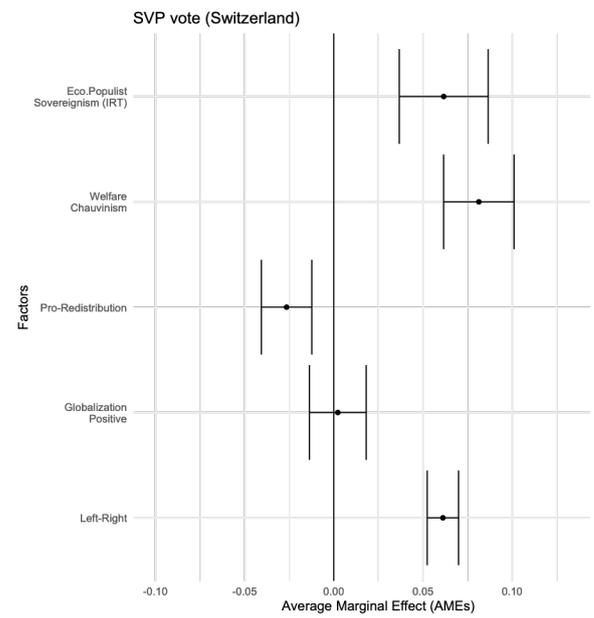


Figure 4. Average marginal effects (AMEs) of EPS and other attitudinal correlates on RRP voting\*

France



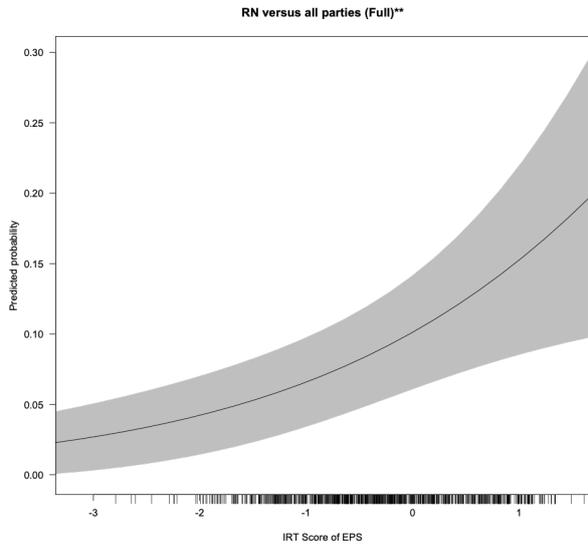
Switzerland



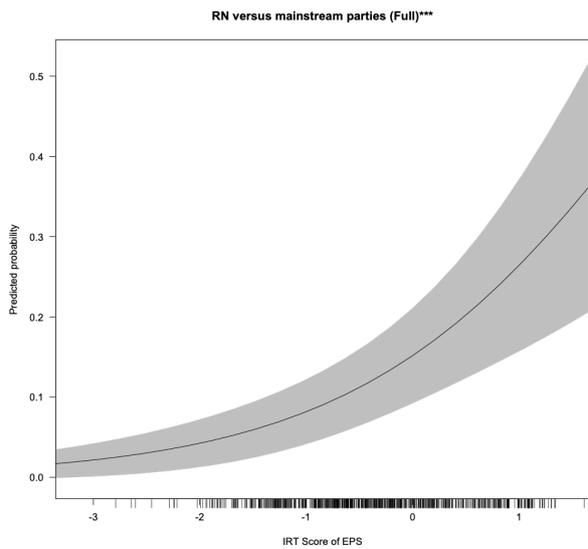
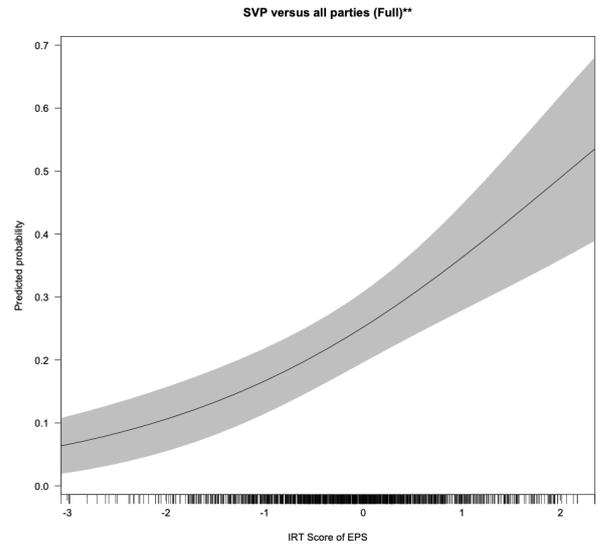
\*Based on full model in Table 3 (second column); for clarity, sociodemographic controls are not shown but are included in the model.

Figure 5. Predicted probabilities of RRP voting\* by levels of EPS in France and Switzerland

France



Switzerland



\* All probabilities are calculated using average marginal effects (AMEs); \*\*Based on full model in Table 3 (second column); \*\*\*Full model for RN versus mainstream –i.e. Greens, Socialists, LREM and Republicans—excluding other populist voters on the left (LFI) and right (DLF).

## APPENDIX

### A1. Details of the survey

Our data come from a survey of national samples of about 2,000 French and Swiss age-voting citizens, which was conducted online by YouGov in April 2019. Participants were selected by the polling company from their national panels recruited via the internet. The survey used quota-sampling based on gender, age, occupation and size of municipality with regional stratification. Potential ‘speeders’ who had completed the questionnaire in less half the median time were excluded, resulting in final analytical samples of 1,932 and 2,062 respondents in France and Switzerland, respectively.

### A2. Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)\*

Number of observations per group (country):

FR 1916

CH 2044

Model Test User Model:

Test statistic 457.510

Degrees of freedom 40

P-value (Chi-square) < 0.01

Test statistic for each group:

FR 215.580

CH 241.929

Model Test Baseline Model:

Test statistic 10591.445

Degrees of freedom 56

P-value < 0.01

User Model versus Baseline Model:

Comparative Fit Index (CFI) 0.96

Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) 0.95

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation:

RMSEA 0.073

90 Percent confidence interval – lower 0.067

90 Percent confidence interval – upper 0.079

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual:

SRMR 0.036

		France	Switzerland
--	--	--------	-------------

		Loading	Intercept	Variance	Loading	Intercept	Variance
EcoPop1	The government in this country does not really care about the people's living standard	0.828	3.743	0.315	0.789	2.798	0.378
EcoPop2	The overall economic well-being of this country has declined	0.647	3.882	0.582	0.605	2.651	0.633
EcoPop4	Citizens should have more say in the important decisions for our country	0.778	4.034	0.395	0.646	3.744	0.583
EcoPop5	In this country, one does not really care about people who work hard	0.645	3.716	0.584	0.724	2.914	0.476
EcoPop6	Today in COUNTRY, many economic decisions are made without considering the interests of the people	0.887	4.109	0.214	0.738	3.416	0.455
EcoSov3	International trade agreements diminish COUNTRY's sovereignty	0.495	2.734	0.755	0.447	2.284	0.800
EcoSov5	Our country should better protect itself from external economic pressures	0.475	4.337	0.774	0.470	3.301	0.779
EcoSov6	Our government does its best to defend COUNTRY's interests in the world	0.537	2.497	0.711	0.434	2.318	0.812

\*Standardized values

### A3. Homogeneity coefficients for individual items and scale

France

\$Hi

Item H se

EcoPop1 0.550 (0.015)

EcoPop2 0.466 (0.018)

EcoPop4 0.523 (0.014)

EcoPop5 0.452 (0.018)

EcoPop6 0.579 (0.013)

EcoSov3 0.393 (0.019)

EcoSov5 0.377 (0.019)

EcoSov6 0.398 (0.019)

\$H

Scale H se

0.465 (0.013)

Switzerland

\$Hi

Item H se

EcoPop1 0.469 (0.014)

EcoPop2 0.393 (0.016)

EcoPop4 0.420 (0.016)

EcoPop5 0.452 (0.014)

EcoPop6 0.458 (0.015)

EcoSov3 0.321 (0.018)

EcoSov5 0.348 (0.017)

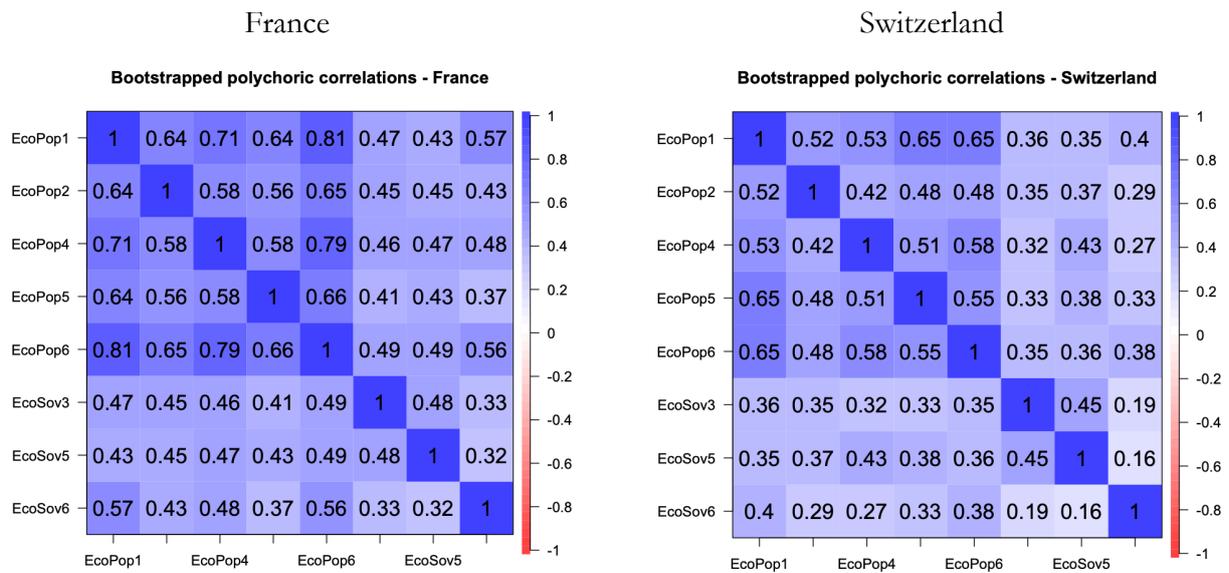
EcoSov6 0.287 (0.019)

\$H

Scale H se

0.393 (0.012)

## A4. Bootstrapped polychoric correlations for the EcoPopSov items



## A5. Tests of monotonicity

France

ItemH	#ac	#vi	#vi/#ac	maxvi	sum	sum/#ac	zmax	#zsig	crit
EcoPop1	0.55	168	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoPop2	0.47	153	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoPop4	0.52	121	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoPop5	0.45	168	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoPop6	0.58	104	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoSov3	0.39	216	13	0.06	0.07	0.56	0.0026	3.07	5
EcoSov5	0.38	143	1	0.01	0.05	0.05	0.0004	1.24	0
EcoSov6	0.40	168	5	0.03	0.05	0.19	0.0011	2.20	2

Switzerland

ItemH	#ac	#vi	#vi/#ac	maxvi	sum	sum/#ac	zmax	#zsig	crit
EcoPop1	0.47	168	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoPop2	0.39	168	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoPop4	0.42	160	1	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.0002	0.78	0
EcoPop5	0.45	161	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoPop6	0.46	156	1	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.0002	1.11	0
EcoSov3	0.32	168	4	0.02	0.07	0.22	0.0013	2.26	1
EcoSov5	0.35	168	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0
EcoSov6	0.29	168	3	0.02	0.04	0.11	0.0007	1.84	1

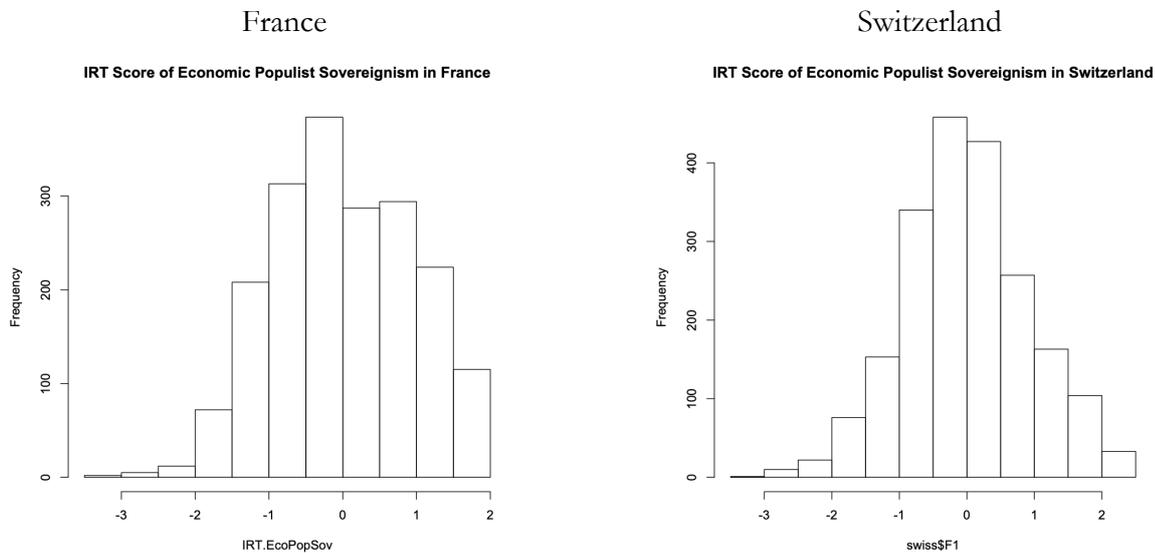
## A6. GRM and IRT Score of Economic Populist Sovereignism

### A6.1. Discrimination parameters and category thresholds

	France						

	Discrimination	b1	b2	b3	b4	b5	b6
EcoPop1	3.68	-2.21	-1.78	-1.40	-0.979	-0.514	0.002
EcoPop2	2.03	-2.77	-2.21	-1.77	-1.138	-0.511	0.176
EcoPop4	2.89	-2.50	-2.02	-1.66	-1.079	-0.473	0.058
EcoPop5	1.94	-2.70	-2.19	-1.73	-1.145	-0.495	0.192
EcoPop6	5.31	-2.19	-1.78	-1.47	-1.030	-0.557	-0.032
EcoSov3	1.28	-2.66	-2.01	-1.37	-0.432	0.411	1.218
EcoSov5	1.21	-4.41	-3.81	-2.78	-1.544	-0.571	0.320
EcoSov6	1.41	-2.55	-1.71	-0.87	-0.181	0.430	1.099
	Switzerland						
	Discrimination	b1	b2	b3	b4	b5	b6
EcoPop1	2.678	-2.11	-1.40	-0.890	-0.288	0.324	0.915
EcoPop2	1.553	-2.49	-1.59	-0.921	-0.147	0.640	1.412
EcoPop4	1.820	-3.11	-2.52	-1.735	-0.835	-0.005	0.704
EcoPop5	2.161	-2.27	-1.59	-1.062	-0.363	0.312	1.031
EcoPop6	2.453	-2.66	-1.83	-1.308	-0.633	0.111	0.792
EcoSov3	1.010	-2.48	-1.53	-0.717	0.402	1.433	2.504
EcoSov5	1.123	-3.76	-2.82	-1.966	-0.705	0.309	1.312
EcoSov6	0.957	-3.04	-1.53	-0.152	0.954	1.946	2.938

## A6.2. Distribution of IRT Scores of EPS in France and Switzerland



## A7. Attitudinal Scales

### A7.1. Reliability (Alpha) and Scalability (H) coefficients for attitude scales in France and Switzerland

	France		Switzerland	
	Alpha	H	Alpha	H
Eco. Populist Sovereignism	0.86	0.47	0.83	0.39
Welfare chauvinism	0.79	0.53	0.73	0.45

Economic redistribution	0.65	0.49	0.52	0.35
Globalization positive	0.75	0.63	0.70	0.56

A7.2. Descriptive statistics for the attitudinal scales in France and Switzerland

France

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Left/Right self-placement*	1,501	5.4	2.8	0.0	3.0	8.0	10.0
Welfare Chauvinism	1,643	4.1	1.5	1.0	3.0	5.2	7.0
Economic Redistribution	1,840	5.2	1.5	1.0	4.0	6.5	7.0
Globalization	1,660	4.4	1.5	1.0	3.5	5.5	7.0
Cultural threat immigration**	1,822	4.4	2.1	1.0	3.0	7.0	7.0

Descriptive Statistics: Switzerland

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Left/Right self-placement*	1,766	5.2	2.2	0.0	4.0	7.0	10.0
Welfare Chauvinism	1,885	3.7	1.2	1.0	3.0	4.5	7.0
Economic Redistribution	1,976	4.8	1.5	1.0	4.0	6.0	7.0
Globalization	1,775	4.8	1.3	1.0	4.0	5.5	7.0
Cultural threat immigration**	2,009	3.9	1.9	1.0	2.0	5.0	7.0

\* Single item

\*\*Single item, reverse-coded

A7.3. Correlations for the Economic Populist Sovereignism IRT scale in France and Switzerland

Attitudes Correlation Matrix: France

	EPS	Left/Right	Welf. Chauvinism	Eco. Redistrib.	Globalization	Cultural threat
EPS	1	0.01	0.30	0.48	-0.32	0.29
Left/Right self- placement	0.01	1	0.49	-0.29	0.01	0.46
Welfare chauvinism	0.30	0.49	1	0.03	-0.25	0.78
Economic redistribution	0.48	-0.29	0.03	1	-0.16	-0.01
Globalization	- 0.32	0.01	-0.25	-0.16	1	-0.23
Cultural threat immigration	0.29	0.46	0.78	-0.01	-0.23	1

Attitudes Correlation Matrix: Switzerland

	EPS	Left/Right	Welf.Chauvinism	Eco.Redistrib.	Globalization	Cultural threat
EPS	1	0.15	0.33	0.41	-0.24	0.29
Left/Right self- placement	0.15	1	0.42	-0.23	-0.09	0.45
Welfare chauvinism	0.33	0.42	1	0.04	-0.34	0.67
Economic redistribution	0.41	-0.23	0.04	1	-0.06	-0.06
Globalization	- 0.24	-0.09	-0.34	-0.06	1	-0.25
Cultural threat immigration	0.29	0.45	0.67	-0.06	-0.25	1